



Urban & Community Forestry Success: CAL FIRE and the California Climate Investments Fund

Trees help conserve energy, reduce stormwater runoff, improve air, soil, and water quality, reduce carbon emissions, improve public health, provide wildlife habitat, and increase property values. In fewer words: they improve the urban environments where 95% of Californians live, work, and play.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CAL FIRE) Urban & Community Forestry (UCF) program works to expand and improve the management of trees in communities throughout California. To this end, CAL FIRE administers state and federal grant programs like the CAL FIRE California Climate Investments program, which in fiscal year 2020, awarded \$18.56 million in cap and trade auction revenues to communities in need of tree canopy assistance.

California matches all federal USDA Forest Service UCF funding on a 1:1 basis and routinely supplements its UCF work with local contributions, in-kind partner donations, and volunteer hours.

CAL FIRE awards three types of UCF grants, ranging in size from \$150,000 to \$1.5 million:

- **Urban Forest Expansion and Improvement.** These grants support tree planting efforts, including the costs associated with site creation, site prep, planting labor, and tree establishment care for up to five years.
- **Urban Forest Management Activities.** These grants are for urban tree inventories, urban forest management plans, urban forest mapping and analysis, and urban forest policy and ordinance creation and monitoring.
- **Urban Wood and Biomass Utilization.** These grants support urban wood and urban forest biomass projects.

Up to 20% of a CAL FIRE UCF grant can be spent on education and outreach. Between 70% and 80% of grant funding must be spent in disadvantaged communities (defined as the top 25% of high scoring census tracts in [CalEnviroScreen 3.0](#)). All grant projects must have quantifiable greenhouse gas reduction benefits.

